

Gospel of John - episode 15

Chapter 7

March 14

Welcome to our sharing on St. John's Gospel. We are continuing to discuss the controversy in John chapter 7, and 8. We are right into the very heart of the confrontation between Jesus and the leadership of Israel, so, I want to begin with 7:14, where I left off the last day. When the festival was half over, Jesus went to the temple and began to teach. The Jewish leaders were astonished, and they said, 'how did he learn to read? He has not been taught'. This is where I left off the last day; I want to give you Jesus' response to this. They have insulted Jesus, which I have told you before, but that is not what we want to look at now. We want to look at what Jesus actually said to them. Jesus said, "my teaching is not from myself. It comes from the one who sent me, and if anyone is prepared to do His Will.... [notice in the above realm, the issue is doing God's Will and loving God and loving your neighbour]. So, if anyone is prepared to do His Will, he would know whether my teaching was from God or not, or whether my teaching was my own. When a man's doctrine is his own, he is hoping to get honour for himself. When he is working for the honour of the one who sent him, he is sincere and he is by no means an imposter. Did not Moses give you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law!" For Jesus to say that to the leadership on their home ground, in the temple, in front of all the pilgrims coming from far and near - this is a public declaration, like it could only be done in an era where there was no phones and no internet. This is as public as it can get. Jesus is absolutely declaring **who he is** and that **they are failed leaders** in the controversy. That is going to continue not only here in chapter seven, but also in chapter eight.

John gives us a front stage and backstage in this drama. You have what is going on with Jesus and the people in the front, and in the backstage, you have the leaders plotting for his death, and they are going to do as much as they can to try and pull him down. So, **your judgement** as to what is going on depends on whether **you** are front stage or you are backstage. Just to complicate it a little bit more, your judgement is also dependent on whether you are at the level of below or the level of above. It is absolutely amazing. John has these wonderful dimensions to his text.

Of course, the problem with the leadership is that Jesus has not studied in their rabbinical schools. I gave you that before. Therefore, they have not given him the knowledge that he has. They do not know where he got the knowledge he has, and that is why they insult him. You find that when you go back to the Synoptic Gospels. The people were always amazed at Jesus's teaching. Here is just one example: Mark 1:22, "The people were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority in himself. He didn't teach like the scribes". This is actually terribly important. To teach like a scribe meant that you quoted all the famous rabbis and let people know just how much you have studied the scrolls, but you were simply giving back what other people had given to you. What Jesus gave them, they knew came from his innermost being, and they also knew instinctively that it was the truth. This is a real problem for the Jewish leaders, and they don't want to accept it.

So, Jesus says, 'my teaching has not come from myself'. In other words, I didn't make this up. This is truth as it really is. This is me revealing what God the Father wants you to have. If they are saying you have not studied under the famous Hillel, Shammai or Gamaliel, then Jesus is saying, but 'I was in the bosom of the Father for all eternity!' I've had the greatest teacher that can be in heaven or on earth. I have been taught by God. Now, any of the saints and mystics who have had very deep experiences of God will tell you that they learned more in an hour in God's presence than you would learn in years of a university. The knowledge is infused into you. So, Jesus is telling them, 'yes, I've been to school eternally'. Yes, I've had the greatest teacher that there possibly could be. But because you do not accept that I have been there, John has told us that back in chapter 1:18, that Jesus leaned on the Heart of the Father for all eternity, and that He is the one sent by the Father. In other words, if you go to a university, it is not that you are going to learn. You are going to become a teacher yourself. You are going to pass this on to others. Jesus is saying, I was in the Father's school for all eternity, and he sent me to teach you'.

Then he said that anyone who is prepared to do God's Will would actually be able to recognise that teaching that is true. The church has always acknowledged that in the heart of the laity, in the church, there is **the census fidelium** - whereby we know when we are being taught the truth, and we recognise the truth, and we recognise falsehood. We give exactly the same response to falsehood as the people in Jerusalem did to the men who were teaching them wrongly. We pay no attention to it. We just don't listen to it.

Jesus says that if someone produces a doctrine or a religion of his own, he is looking for some kind of benefit. What benefit is Jesus looking for? Nothing at all. He has given everything he is and everything he has to us. By the time Jesus died on the cross, he had given us his own Father to be our Father, and in his dying, he gave us his own Mother to be our mother. He gave us his own Word to feed us. He gave us his own Flesh and Blood to be our food and drink. He gave us his whole 'realm of above' to be our area where we could live. He gave us his own life. He gave us everything he had. By the time he actually drew his final breath on the Cross, there was nothing left but the skin on his bones, not even a drop of blood left. He had given absolutely everything. He is not the one who is playing the hypocrite! It is them, because he has already shown them. We are going to see it again in chapter eight, that while they proclaim the law, they don't actually keep it. They break the law quite a lot, but they punish the laity for doing the same!

One of the duties of the leaders of any church, indeed, as well as the leaders of Israel, was to discern a true prophet from a false prophet. This particular part of the controversy is dealt with in the Synoptics more than in John - they should have discerned whether John the Baptist was a true prophet. If they did, they would have accepted Jesus. Because they didn't discern John, they have no ability to discern Jesus at all.

Then Jesus challenges them. He says to them, "why do you want to kill me?" Now what he is doing is that he is bringing their secret plotting out into the public eye, and the crowds who are present in the temple are completely shocked. "You're crazy, they said, nobody wants to kill you". Oh, but they do! What Jesus has done is he has brought it out into the light so that it can be dealt with.

Then he says to the leadership in front of everybody - because the whole controversy is in public. "The reason why you want to kill me is because I cured that man that was 38 years sick". Let me read this for you. "Why do you want to kill me? The crowd replied, you are mad! Who wants to kill you? Jesus said, there is one work that I have done, and you are all surprised at it" - that is he healed a man on the Sabbath day. "Look, he said, Moses ordered you to practise circumcision - not that it began with Moses - it goes back right to the Patriarchs - and you circumcise people on the Sabbath. Now, if a man can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses is not broken, why are you angry with me for making a man whole on the Sabbath, making him complete. Do not judge by appearances". Now, he is going to say exactly the same thing in the next chapter: "stop judging by appearances'. Let your judgement be according to what is right". Now, everybody in the audience would have understood the implication of what Jesus is saying about making a man whole on the Sabbath. So, we have a little reminder that when they circumcised a child in those days, they said that the child was **being healed** because he was being brought right into the Covenant. Jesus says, 'if that is how you understand circumcision, then you must understand that I have come to make everybody whole. I have come to make them complete'. Of course, you would make them complete on the Sabbath. "My Father goes on working, and so do I". Do you remember chapter 5:17? Jesus continues giving life and making people whole on the Sabbath. He deliberately challenged them on this because they were merely looking at external rules. They were not looking at what God was doing.

Jesus has answered them on that, so they want to now change the topic to "who are you and where do you come from?" He will answer them many times, but they refuse to accept his answers. His extraordinary patience in dealing with them fascinates me.

"Meanwhile, some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'isn't this the man they want to kill?' Oh, so the people who thought Jesus was crazy in saying that the leadership wanted to kill him were actually the pilgrims coming from all over the known world for this feast. But those who lived in Jerusalem, who could hear the gossip around the city, knew what was going on. Yet here he is! He is speaking freely and they have nothing to say to him. But you see, they are plotting in the background. In chapter eight, you will see how they come out and challenge him. But they want the people to feel as if everything was normal, when it is not normal. "Can it be true that the authorities have made up their minds that this man really is the Christ? Yet we all know where he comes from, but when the Christ appears, nobody will know where he comes from".

So, this is the subject of the next part of the controversy. Where does this man come from? Now, the thing is, Israel was a small country. A small investigation, would yield all the information. To me, it is completely impossible that the leadership in Jerusalem did not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. They are going to make an insinuation to him in chapter eight that they do know about his birth. So, they are being very hypocritical and deceitful in their dealings with him. Everybody knew that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem because the prophet Micah said that very clearly, "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, out of you will come the one who is to shepherd my people, Israel". They knew that. They also knew that he had to be a Judean, but Jesus comes from Galilee. They knew that if he was truly the Messiah, he would have to be a descendant of King David.

They also knew that Jesus' Father, Joseph was dead. So, we are going to have wonderful toing and froing on these subjects as we go on, because they know him superficially, Jesus said that knowing somebody superficially is not knowing them! If I know your name and your address, that does not mean I know you personally. Only somebody who is in a close relationship with you begins to know you. As people who are married will tell you, it can take a lifetime to truly know another person. Anybody who is in a prayer life will tell you it takes a whole lifetime to really get to know God. Jesus answers their queries. He says, "yes, you know me" - that is, 'I am Yeshua, son of Joseph of Nazareth'. You know where I come from - from Nazareth. But these are not the real realities. "Yet I have not come from myself. No, there is one who sent me and I come from him". Now, they can hear clearly that Jesus is saying, I have not come from Joseph of Nazareth because he has said over and over. **'I come from my Father.** I come from the heaven. I come from above'.

"There is one who sent me, and I really come from him, and you do not know him". Now, back in chapter five, Jesus told the woman of Samaria that they were worshipping a God they didn't really know. But now we are in the heart of Jerusalem. We are in the temple. We are actually in the presence of the leadership of Israel, and Jesus tells them, 'you don't know him either!' I wonder, is there any difference 20 centuries later? I don't think so. I think the Lord is still with us, but still unknown to us. How many people truly know God? How many people truly have a relationship with God? How many people know for certain that Jesus really is the Son of God? Oh, yes, they have the doctrine answers. They have information in a book.

But do they know it themselves? Do they know it in their hearts? And if everybody else denied it, do they know? I think one of the most wonderful answers I ever received was from a man who said to me, **'I know that I know that I know.** If they take me apart piece by piece, every part of me will declare the truth, that Jesus is God. I said, yes, **you know,** other people just simply have doctrine they don't know. This was the position here, that people had lots of doctrine, and loads of commentaries; they had lots of liturgy, but they didn't have this personal relationship that gave them **personal knowledge of God.** That is what the Lord wants each one of us to have - that each one of us would walk with God and know God personally. Jesus said, "you don't know him, but I know him - because He has been on the bosom of the Father for all eternity, "because I have come from him. And it was he who sent me". The leadership are so annoyed because they know exactly what he is claiming, so they wanted to arrest him. But John says the time had not come. Jesus is going to tell his apostles in chapter nine. 'Look, until my hour comes, I am as safe as anything'. As long as the light is there, so long as the day is there, there is no problem. So, getting to know God personally is a very important issue.

Let us look at the next section of this tussle between Jesus and the leadership: There were many people in the crowd who believed in him. However, they were saying, "when the Christ comes, would he have more signs than this man?" You see, this is the problem that we heard of, even with Nicodemus back in chapter three, that the Jewish people are interested in the signs. Nicodemus said, "we know you come from God because of the signs". Here are the men present in the temple for this feast, and they are saying, this man has the signs. Hearing that rumours like this were going around about him spreading among the people, the leadership sent the temple police to arrest Jesus. This is a really wonderful moment; the fact that they send the police to arrest Jesus - this is the first time they take action against him. It is because no matter what they do, Jesus is giving more and more evidence as to who he is. In

spite of all the controversy, in spite of anything that the leadership are saying, more and more people are believing in Jesus. This provoked them to try and arrest him. Jesus' response to this was, "I will remain with you only a short time now" - He only has months to live! "Then I will go back to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me, because where I am, you cannot come".

Jesus warns the chosen people in the very heart of their country, city and temple, that the day of salvation for them is almost over. He had come for them. It was three and a half years as the prophets have said; 3&1/2 years, 42 months, or 1260 days; it was a short period of time; it was the day of grace. It was when God would be with them personally, but it was the day of decision also; they didn't realise they were in the 'valley of decision'. If he goes back to the Father and they still have not made a decision about him, then the day of salvation will be over and they will have missed it. There is no greater tragedy you could think of! God doesn't play games with us. God himself was present to them in the temple that day in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. They were the most privileged people on the planet, and yet they do not act like people who are privileged. The leaders completely misunderstand because their blindness is going deeper and deeper, so, they react on the level of below. They said, "where is he going that we can't be able to find him? Is he going abroad to the people who are dispersed among the Greeks? And will he teach the Greeks? What does he mean when he says, you will look for me and you will not find me, that where I am, you cannot come?"

So, you can see, they have no idea what Jesus is actually saying, and yet they have stumbled on a truth unconsciously, because when John wrote this text, the church had gone abroad! The whole of the kingdom of God had gone abroad. They were teaching the Greeks and they were teaching the Romans and everybody else that the church was going to go abroad after the Resurrection. It was going to be a great tragedy for them, because at that stage, they would be facing the judgement of God. Sadly, the nation would have missed its opportunity, its day of grace. It is **Yom Yahweh**, the day of the Lord. I think it is extremely sad. Jesus has one more great revelation to make to them in this context. And I just am fascinated with the fact that regardless of the opposition against him, he will persevere. You realise that he is not motivated by anything outside of himself. His motivation comes absolutely from within.

"On the last and the greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood there and he cried out, if any man is thirsty, let him come to me. Let the man come and drink. If he believes in me, as scripture says, from his breast will flow fountains of living water. John says he was speaking of the spirit that had not yet been given because he had not yet been glorified". Jesus is now making this fantastic revelation that he is the Rock that will be struck so that the living water will flow. Once that living water begins to flow from his Heart, on Calvary, anybody of any nationality, anywhere, anytime, any generation, any age, anybody can come. He is not fussy. He wants us all. He wants his Father's house full. So, if you go back to the book of Exodus, there was a very wonderful moment when Moses really needed to give the people water.

They were stuck in the desert, with nowhere to drink water. The Lord told them to do what seems something totally unlikely, that is the Lord told him to go to a particular rock and that he was to strike the rock. But what the book of Exodus actually says is, "I will stand before you at that rock". So, look at this. There is the rock, and Moses is to strike it. And the Lord said, I will stand before you. So, he is actually

striking the Lord! That is exactly what happened on Calvary, that the people struck the Lord, and out of him flowed the fountains of living water that are still flowing out to the generations everywhere, all the time. His wonderful gift of grace. So, Jesus was saying to them, 'I am the rock of salvation'. Now, it is a huge topic, and I won't go into it because otherwise I will never finish the gospel! There are many texts in the Old Testament that God is the Rock of our Salvation. Jesus says, 'I am that rock and I am the one that will be struck for you. But it is from this striking that you will receive life'.

We will continue this in our next session. Thank you for listening.

INTERVAL

Welcome to our sharing on St. John's Gospel. I want to continue with chapter seven. We are dealing with Jesus claiming to be the water from the rock that will give life to everyone. This is the living water that was spoken about in chapter four. The woman had no idea where this water was going to come from. Now we know. Jesus said, 'come to me if you are thirsty'. He chose the last and greatest day of the festival when everybody would be present, to reveal himself as the rock of salvation. Here is a little bit of background so that you can hear the Old Testament scriptures being fulfilled. Zechariah chapters 9-14. I'm not going to read them all, but you can read them all. It gives us a bit of backdrop to what's going to happen between now and the hour of Jesus, so that we can see why he cried out in the temple that he alone is the fulfilment of the scriptures. For example, Zechariah nine tells us that the Messiah would come to Jerusalem as a king, but he would come humble and riding on a donkey.

This is the opposite of what they were expecting him to be, which was a political leader and a leader of armies who would fight wars. Zechariah 13:1 said that he would set up a fount of salvation in Jerusalem and for Jerusalem. Zechariah 14:8, that living waters would flow out to the world from Jerusalem. And Zechariah 14:16, then they would keep the feast of Tabernacles properly. Zechariah 13:1 that Jerusalem would be cleansed, and 14:21, and there would be no more traders in the temple. Now, I've just taken a couple of sentences scattered around these chapters of Zechariah to let you know that everybody present would have recognised all the signs for they knew the scriptures. So, John is telling us that Jesus is fulfilling all of this. The four Gospels give us the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. So, Jesus waited for the last and the final day of the festival because on that day, the Levites took water from the pool of Siloam in solemn procession to the altar of God. They poured it over the altar thanking God for the last harvest and asking him for the next one. So, it's a thanksgiving for harvest, and it's also a request for water, for rain.

Jesus took a stand in a prominent place where everybody could hear. He cried out from the depths of his being, even from the depths of God, to say, 'come to me'. He cried out so loudly that all Israel heard him, and they did understand. The point is that John is saying that **the Messiah** had come to Jerusalem. Their prayers for living water had been heard, but the response that God had given had surpassed their expectation that they literally couldn't believe it. When Jesus made his cry that any man could come to him, he was raising it above the limitations of their nationalistic pride and saying, No, God is for everyone. The Saviour is for everyone. The living water is for everyone. It's tremendous good news for us all. Jesus is the rock that's going to be struck on Calvary for this living water to flow. This fulfils Numbers 20: 9-11

where Moses struck the rock in the desert, so the people will strike the Lord as well. So that's why I told you in the last episode that in that text in Book of Numbers the Lord said, 'I will stand before you on the rock'.

They had to strike the Lord! I want to remind you of what I told you about Jacob many episodes ago, and that his name was changed to Israel because he had been strong against God. When you read the books of Joshua and Judges, 1+2 Samuel, 1+2 Kings, you realise that this people had been strong against God throughout all their history, and they will be strong against God again, and **will** strike him. But the incredible thing is that in spite of all that's going on for individuals and for groups and for the nation, God does bring about the salvation of the world! Ezekiel's vision of the water flowing from the side of the temple is fulfilled, and salvation is, in fact, given to the world - and Jesus is, in fact, the Lamb of God. It's just totally amazing. It's just terribly sad that they couldn't see - that they couldn't appreciate it, that they didn't have the ability to be able to thank the Lord for this wonderful gift that he was giving. But I just want to mention Ezekiel again and show you a fulfilment that goes on into the future and that John speaks about it in the Book of Revelation. This great river that Ezekiel saw began in a small way and got bigger and bigger as it flowed out into the world. He said that he saw many trees on either side of the bank. These are the saints drawing from the living waters of grace. They are able to produce twelve crops a year, which, of course, is miraculous. Along the river on either bank will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fades. This is the same language of above that Jesus is using in chapter six, Jesus will fulfil and surpass the Manna which merely foreshadowed his bread.

In chapter seven the rock in the wilderness is also only a foreshadowing of what he is offering. It is the book of Revelation that gives us the final statement about this. Revelation 7:17 says, "for the Lamb is at the centre of the throne, and he will be their shepherd". Look at the mixed images there. The Lamb is the shepherd! It's amazing. "He will lead them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away the tears from every cheek". In Revelation 22, when John is speaking about the new Jerusalem with the Lord able to live on the earth, and that the earth becomes a great temple of God, we read "then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the city. And on either side of the river there was the trees of life, producing twelve crops in the year". So, you start off with Ezekiel's vision, and you end up with this wonderful description of John in the book of Revelation.

We understand what Jesus is saying here, therefore, in John chapter seven, because here we do not have the fulfilment yet. Jesus has not become the Lamb of God. They have to wait until Jesus becomes the Lamb of God for all of this to be fulfilled. The subject, therefore, is this: is he the Messiah or is he not? This is the discussion all over the temple among those coming from the different countries. There were strong reactions to Jesus' declaration because of his origins and because of their misunderstanding and so on. In fact, your reaction and my reaction depends on whether we are on the level of below or we are on the level of above also. We know the leaders are on the level of below so, you can expect trouble.

Here are some of the reactions that Jesus got. This is 7:40-44: the crowd went both ways. You can expect that in a large group of people. Some of them said, he has to be the prophet. He is showing all the signs. Others said, yeah, he is the Christ. He has to be. Nobody else will show us as many signs as this man.



The negative side was, but the Christ wouldn't come from Galilee, would he? And others said, and the Christ has to be descended from David, this man what do we know about him? Of course, Jesus fulfilled all of the requirements but they didn't know. They knew very little about him, in fact. The Synoptic Gospels telling us that he was born in Bethlehem, and that he was a descendant of David. In fact, he was the only person who had a legitimate right to the throne of David during his lifetime! He was the only claimant. He was a Judean because he was born in Judea, so, he ticks off all the boxes for the Messiah.

But they don't have this information, so, they have all these questions. Here is a wonderful moment: it's a wonderful way to finish this particular chapter. This is verses 7:45-52: The utter frustration of the leaders comes out. When the police, who were sent to arrest Jesus come back bearing testimony instead! I think that's absolutely incredible. "The police went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees who said to them, 'why haven't you brought him? The police replied but nobody's ever spoken like him". They were completely bowled over. They were completely taken by Jesus. It was perfectly obvious that they had gone over to Jesus' side. There was going to be no arrest so, the Pharisees turned to sarcasm and scorn; what is inside of them comes out - and we've seen this from the very beginning - that Jesus is able to bring out what is hidden in people's hearts, locked inside of their minds. If you bring something from darkness into the light, it can be dealt with. They said, "have any of the authorities believed in him?" Now, the Pharisees don't seem to realise that Jesus has some friends in the Sanhedrin! They just keep quiet about it. "Have any of the Pharisees believed in him, this rabble, they know nothing about the law. They are damned". What a way to look upon the people in the church, for example. They write them off completely. 'They know nothing'.

Then the shock comes: Nicodemus stands up in the Sanhedrin. We thought back in chapter three that Nicodemus hadn't really gone anywhere, but in actual fact, he becomes a secret disciple of Jesus. "One of them, Nicodemus, the same man who had come to Jesus earlier by night, said, but surely the law does not allow us to pass judgement on a man without giving him a hearing and discovering what he is about. And to this they answered, are you a Galilean too? Go into the matter. You will see for yourself that Prophets do not come out of Galilee". So, you can hear that Jesus is judged by prejudice, by hatred, not by truth. So, when they said, 'have any of the authorities believed in him?' As I've said a moment ago, Jesus did have some secret friends in the Sanhedrin. When the leaders wrote off the people as knowing nothing and therefore damned, you must ask 'what was the point of being a leader of a religion where everybody was damned?' They didn't know that, but In saying that, they were declaring that their religion was now obsolete and it had failed completely. Nicodemus demanded that if they proclaim the law, and they say they are followers of Moses, they should at least obey the law.

What is it that Nicodemus is demanding? In Deuteronomy 11:6, it says, "you must give your brothers a fair hearing. You must see that justice is done". And in Deuteronomy 17:4 it says, "you must do careful inquiry if one of your brothers is in trouble". Instead of saying, oh, yes, we must obey the law of God, they simply retorted, 'prophets don't come out of Galilee'. In other words, they are not going to give Jesus a fair hearing. They are not going to do the proper inquiry. They are not going to do anything. They are simply going to find a way to kill him, and that is that. It is really sad. Therefore, it is very clear from whatever

standard you are looking at that these people are sinning against God because it is premeditated murder and therefore a serious breaking of the fifth commandment.

Now, if you go back to chapter one and you meet Nathaniel, who was a real Israelite, and Jesus said that he had no guile. He didn't want to accept a prophet from Nazareth in the beginning, but his heart wasn't closed. He opened his heart to the truth and discovered that he had found the king of Israel and the Son of God. If only these people would open their hearts, they too would discover they have their Messiah. And it's even greater than that. God himself became their Saviour, just as the prophets said he would. So that's the end of chapter seven, and we're going to continue into chapter eight, where the controversy between the Jewish leaders and Jesus gets deeper and deeper.

As we go into chapter eight, we meet a very wonderful scene. The Jewish leaders think they have got the better of Jesus, that they are going to produce a case where they can bring Jesus down. The whole thing boomerangs back on them. The incident of the woman taken in adultery is stuck right in the middle of this controversy so there's all this anger and injustice and right in the middle, you've got this very delicate scene. in which Jesus shows himself to everybody as the Merciful Judge and Saviour of everyone, guilty or innocent. It's really very beautiful. So, look at the background because you remember I told you that we have got to go back as well as forward to understand the text that you are dealing with. So, if you go back to chapter 5:30 Jesus said that he judges only in the way that the Father wants him to judge. That is terribly important. When we go into John, chapter eight they are going to force Jesus to judge. In chapter eight, verse 15 Jesus says that he judges, meaning condemns nobody. That is not his business. We were told back in chapter 3:16 that "the Father sent his son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through him the world would be saved". Therefore, Jesus is going to find a way to save whoever is presented to him. We will find in chapter 8:46 that Jesus will say to them: "can any of you convict me of sin?" All of this is terribly important in the story of a woman taken in adultery.

At the end of chapter seven, all went home, and Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak, he appeared again in the temple for this was normal for rabbis at first light to be in the temple to teach people. Before they went to their work or whatever. As all the people came. Now, I want you to notice the 'all'. We will come back to that. He sat down and began to teach them. So, the whole crowd has gathered around Jesus. They are fascinated by all the controversy between himself and the leaders. They are fascinated by his peace, his calm, his patience, his self-control. That nothing seems to faze him. There is something about him that makes them attracted to him like moths to a light. then in the middle of all this "the Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery, and making her stand there in full view of everybody they said to Jesus, Master, [notice he is not Lord; He is not Kyrie], they said, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses had ordered us in the law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What do you say?" I'm going to stop there.

We will come back to the text afterwards. Many of the scholars think that this story of the woman taken in adultery doesn't really belong to John's Gospel. They will tell you that the whole tone of it sounds much more like Luke than John. But the interesting thing is that from the very beginning, the church accepted

this as part of John's Gospel. And that's where it is. When you see what John is doing you will realise even if he borrowed the story from Luke, it still fits perfectly into this particular context. In order to have some kind of a background to this, I want to remind you of a story that's in the book of Daniel. At the very end of the Book of Daniel, in chapter 13, is the story of Susanna. Susanna was a model wife and mother. She literally was a lily in marriage. I can't spend time telling you the story. It's a beautiful story. I just want to give you the essence of it. She was accused of adultery by two elders in the community, and it is elders in the community that are bringing this woman to Jesus as well.

Now, in the case of Susanna, the woman was innocent. She had not committed the crime that they said, but they still managed to get her condemned to death by stoning. Because she was innocent Susanna turned to God and prayed for justice. The story tells us that God raised up the spirit in the prophet Daniel, and he brought about justice, and the woman was saved, and the two men were punished, so justice was done. Now, there is a lot in the story that I have avoided. I've just given you the essence of it, because when you are finished studying the story of Susanna, you say, 'but she was innocent'. What about somebody who would be guilty? What would happen if somebody was guilty? Do they automatically get this stoning to death? This is the issue we are dealing with here, because the woman that is brought to Jesus is guilty. Nobody doubts that so, what John is telling us is that whether you are innocent or guilty, God has a way to save you. the door into heaven for the guilty is **the door of mercy**. At the end of this story St. Augustine had a wonderful comment on that day: Misera met Misericordia, misery met great mercy. So, the door to heaven for the guilty is the door of mercy, and for the innocent, it can be the door of justice. That is why these two stories are very important together. When the church gives us the story of the woman taken in adultery in the Liturgy in the gospel, it gives us the story of Susanna as the first reading. And I'm always fascinated at people not connecting the two. They're actually terribly important.

So, we have to look into this, therefore, that the Bible is telling us, because the story of Susanna is in the Old Testament, and the story of this guilty woman is in the New Testament, so that the scriptures as a whole are trying to tell us that God has found a way for us. So, the context is still the Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus spent the night on the Mount of Olives, and he would have spent the night with his family and friends all be staying in tents, because that is what they did during that feast. So, very early the next morning, Jesus goes into the temple. The first thing that John wants you to note is that the people rush to Jesus. That means they are not going to all the other rabbis something very simple happens - that is envy and jealousy against Jesus is aroused in the others. It's actually very simple. The vote of the people seems to be this particular teacher. Jesus teaches them because that is why he has come from the Father, and his teaching is not his own; His teaching came from the Father. So, Jesus begins to teach them as if there was no great controversy going on, as if there was no big plot in the background to kill him.

It is totally fascinating. It is also fascinating that Jesus made not one move to defend himself physically against the leaders. He doesn't take security measures. When you see our leaders today, you see them surrounded by all kinds of security men, and you couldn't get near them. Jesus left himself completely vulnerable to the crowds. The book of proverbs 8:31 says that "the Lord delights to be with the children of men". Jesus certainly illustrated that, that the Lord delighted to be with the children of men. All of a

sudden, in the middle of Jesus' teaching, there was a huge commotion, with pushing, shoving and shouting. What you find is that a group of Scribes and Pharisees and other men literally barge in, force their way through the crowd - make the crowd stand back - because they are the leaders; they are dragging along a woman that they have caught in adultery and they literally throw her in front of Jesus. The extraordinary thing is they have now exposed this woman's sin before absolutely everybody! Where is the love? Where is the understanding? Where is the compassion? Where is anything? I'll take this up in our next episode because we are into real drama here.

Thank you for joining us. God bless.